

TRINITY CHURCH

THIRD AND BROAD STREETS

COLUMBUS, OHIO

January 24th, 1939

Dr. Robert E. Speer,
Rockledge,
Lakeville, Connecticut

Dear Dr. Speer;-

I have become much interested in an Assyrian student, Sardook de Mar Shimun, who is now studying at the Lutheran Seminary here in Columbus. He is doing very good work in his studies and seems to be commending himself to those associated with him. There is a possibility of his moving to Chicago to take charge of an Assyrian congregation.

The reason I am writing is that I am trying to inform myself about Mr. de Mar Shimun as much as possible before extending some help to him.

In talking with the dean of the seminary I ran across a letter in which you gave the impression you had gone very fully into the case of Mr. de Mar Shimun when he had gone to see you a couple of years ago. After very careful investigation you had apparently felt it advisable to urge him to return to his country. This was all set forth in the letter to Dean Beuhring of the Capital University School. In your investigation you, if I remember rightly, revealed some rather contradictory reports, some people speaking highly of him, and some being extremely critical. I am writing to ask you whether you have had any further information with regard to Mr. de Mar Shimun, or whether there is anything further that you would like to say about him.

He has a cousin who shares the same family name, and who is the Patriarch of Assyrian Church. I have wondered whether by any chance any of your informants could have been thinking of him instead of the de Mar Shimun about whom you wrote.

Frankly, I am just writing in order to get any information which might help me clarify my own mind as to just what should be done in helping this man. I do want to be just in my estimate of him.

Sincerely yours,

Anson Phelps Stokes, Jr.

July 20th, 1914.

STATEMENT REGARDING PERSIAN SOLICITORS.

Scarcely a week goes by that inquiries are not made of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions with regard to natives of Persia or Eastern Turkey who are soliciting contributions for the support of alleged orphanages, schools or churches in their home communities. Hundreds of these solicitors have gone out into all parts of the world, and there are communities in Eastern Turkey which are entirely supported by the funds which are sent home. As a matter of fact, there are no orphanages, schools or other institutions justifying these solicitations. Many of the testimonials carried by these men are forged, others are of no value because their writers have no knowledge of the men or of the conditions in the communities from which they come. None of these solicitors have or can obtain letters of endorsement from any of the American or British missionaries at work in the regions from which they come, nor from the American or British Consuls resident in this territory.

The accompanying report regarding this whole ~~disreputable~~ discreditable enterprise was written by a Church of England missionary to the American Consul in Van, Turkey.

No contributions should be given to these solicitors. The solicitors themselves should be turned over to the United States Immigration authorities who will, if possible, arrange for their deportation.

Robert E. Speer,
Secretary.

C O P Y

The English Mission, Van, Turkey.
Oct. 27, 1909.

Milo Jewett, Esq.,
The American Consul, Trebizond.

Dear Sir:

Dr. Reynolds has handed me the letter which you wrote to him on Oct. 15th, 1909, asking for information concerning "Mar Sergius," Bishop of the Chaldeans of Martha, Jello, Kurdistan" and "Deacon Simcon Daniels" said to have been authorized by the said Mar Sergius to collect subscriptions for the Church in question.

I. Mar Sergius. (The title is used indifferently for the Bishop or Saint and literally means "Lord"), is undoubtedly a bishop of the church called "Assyrian", "Nestorian", "Chaldean", whose members are found for the most part in the district known as Kurdistan. Locally, the last of the three names is confined to those Christians of the "Violet" in question, who are in communion with Roman Catholics, but Mar Sergius is not one of that branch, but of the older independent church. He resides at a place properly called "Mata Mar Zeia" (village of St. Zeia,) and colloquially "Mata", in the Mt. district of Kilu, Hakkari. The nearest center of government is Julamerk, distant one day's journey, but there is little law or order of any kind in the district. The Bishop is about 23 years of age.

II. The letters. This bishop does often give letters, commending the bearer to the charitable, and giving him more or less authority to collect "for the church", in the countries to which he goes. The bearers represent themselves as collecting for church-building, schools or orphanages, etc. In no case have I ever known any of the money given to be spent on anything but the benefit of the collector himself, nor could the Patriarch of the church (who is known as Mar Shimun, and resides at Julamerk) tell of such a case. All churches in Jila are ancient; there are no orphanages, and such schools as exist are the property of foreign missions. The men who go out thus collect simply for themselves, tho the bishop in question may so far forget himself as to accept a small share of the plunder. The Patriarch has made efforts to stop this traffic, both because of the scandal, and because he knows that the money thus given would suffice to supply all the schools, etc. which his church needs, if it were spent for the purpose for which it was given. He has sent letters to the government of India, authorizing the prosecution of any who collect in his name, and he would no doubt do the same for the American Government if requested. He has not, however, been able to control his colleagues.

There are, of course, excuses for those who practice this traffic. 1st. The utter poverty in which the people and the bishop dwell, which makes them willing to adopt any means of earning money. 2nd. The fact that for generations, neither property nor life has had any sanctity in the country, and these men only collect contributions with a letter instead of with a gun. There is no very clear distinction between robbery and swindling, and in this country robbery is and always has been fair play. 3rd. The folly of those, in every country, who have apparently more charity than brains. A man in utter poverty knows that by going to America and "pitching a yarn" which he would not expect to be taken seriously in his own land, he can collect £ 3,000, which is a fortune here, and live well mean time. It will be seen that the temptation to take advantage of the criminal folly of those who trust these orientals as they would never dream of trusting their own countrymen is very great. If the people in America or elsewhere wish to help the individuals who come to them, there is no more to be said, for their personal need is often real enough. If however they wish, as is usually the case, to help the church, then let them give their contributions "earmarked" for whatever purpose they wish, to some one of the missions at work in the land, and they will have some security that the money will be expended for the purpose for which it is given. If the collector objects to this course, he thereby confesses himself a fraud. These missions are 1st. American. The Presbyterian Mission at Urmi, Persia, and the Congregational Mission at Van, Turkey. 2nd, English. The English Church Mission (Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission) at Urmi and Van. 3rd. French. The Lazarist Fathers at Urmi, and the Dominicans at Van. 4th, Russian. The "Orthodox" Church Mission at Urmi. One or the other of these will suit most religious idiosyncrasies.

I doubt if prosecution of the collectors, frauds as they usually are, would be of any use, for two reasons. A. The letters which they show are usually ~~genuine~~ genuine, tho used with fraudulent intent. B. Imprisonment is no deterrent to these men, seeing that the prisons of any civilized land give board and lodging far superior to any they can get at home, and conviction is no disgrace in a land where it usually affords a presumption of innocence, and only proves that the defendant did not bribe! Confiscation of the letters and money, if possible, and deportation of the bearers as "Undesirable aliens" is preferable, if possible by American as it is by English law. What is needed for the abating of a custom which is at once a scandal and a nuisance is that the charitable should be more careful in their giving. While their carelessness makes a low form of swindling easy and profitable, poor men will swindle. I do not defend Mar Sergius nor his collectors, but I do not think the guilt all on their side.

I inclose a translation of the letter you sent to Dr. Reynolds; I do not know the men, nor do I know the "Stephen George, Fake-priest," whose photograph sent by the Canadian government, has also been forwarded.

from Constantinople. He appears as if dressed as a European, shaved and washed, while in his own country it is not likely he would be seen in any one of these conditions, and hence is difficult to recognize. No doubt all these collectors are of the type described above.

A word upon my personal position. I am one of a small band of English clergy, sent by the Archbishop of Canterbury, England, to work under the Patriarch of the "Assyrian", "Nestorian" or "Chaldean" Church for the education of their clergy. I am well acquainted with all the Bishops of the church and believe that most of them are disgusted with the scandal and desirous to abate it. It must be remembered, however, that for some generations the lesson has been well rubbed into the oriental, that Franks are made of money, and are "fair game". Steps are being taken to put a stop to this traffic, in India, and I hope the same will be done in America.

I remain, Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) W. A. Wigram,
Head of the Mission of the
Archbishop of Canterbury.

TRANSLATION OF A SYRIAC LETTER, FORWARDED FROM AMERICA

Shamsha (i. e. Deacon) Shlimun, son of Babana, village of Jilu, Turkey, and Sh. Nimrud, son of Tawir, and Sh. Simeon, son of Daniel, say this: Sh. Shlimun is now at the house of the "quasia" (priest) of Kangirgish, but says to us "There are now six quasias come to my house with a letter from the bishop, now be it known to you, Mar Sergius, that this quasia is writing to you to see whether you sent us. Two lines in the English language for these two deacons and for me and for him, please send them quickly without fail.

Explanation of the above. Sh. Shlimun and Co. as I judge, came to the house of the "quasia" or clergyman of the place which they call Kangirgish. The "quasia" in question is presumably, the Rev. R. W. Stevens, and Kangirgish the Syrian version of the name of his township. Mr. Stevens said to them "You are the sixth lot of fellows who have come to us to beg in this fashion; I shall write to your bishop and ask whether you are genuine or not. Shlimun (Solomon) then writes himself to the bishop, asking that two lines in the English language may be sent to him at once to prove that he has really been sent out with the episcopal authorization.

C O P Y

Van, Turkey in Asia, Oct. 7, 1909.

Dear Friend,

Three times during the last few months letters have come to me making inquiries regarding Nestorian swindlers, who are operating in the U.S. and Canada. Personally I know a good deal about this class of people and am very desirous to do what I may to put a stop to their depredations, but as my work is for the Armenians and not for the Nestorians, I am not in the way to get at the exact facts needed to nail them. I have accordingly asked the Rev. F. A. Wigram, D.D. the head of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission, if he would make out a statement from facts with which he is personally familiar, which might be sent out as an answer to the inquiries which have come thru Consul Jewett, from the U.S. Government, and through Mr. J. W. Peer, from the Canadian Government. Dr Wigram has kindly prepared a statement, which seems to me and my associates of the Van station eminently correct and enlightening, and it seems to us desirable that it should receive a wider circulation than might come from its being sent merely to the official inquiries. I venture therefore to send a copy to yourself and a few other representative individuals in the U.S. asking that if you deem it wise and desirable, you take measures to get the statement published, in whole or in part, by religious or secular journals, in such a way as to give general circulation to the facts, and make it inexcusable for anyone to be taken in by these swindlers. (Then follows a list of those to whom copies were sent).

I feel as if it were due to the Christian public to make an effort to put a stop to this traffic.

I remain,

Yours most sincerely,

(Missionary of
(Signed) C.C. Raymond (A.R.C.M. to Van)

Dec. 22nd, 1911.

Mr. G. F. Piper, Esq.,
131 Essex St., Salem, Mass.

Dear Sir:-

My associate, Dr. Brown, has referred to me your letter of Dec. 13th, as I happen to be more familiar with the matter of which you write. We have weekly inquiries such as yours regarding these Nestorian solicitors. Some years ago it was discovered that Christian people in Russia and Germany and England and the United States were very charitable with their gifts, and since then literally hundreds of these men, some of whom are ecclesiastics, others of whom are men of other callings, have poured out over these lands, collecting tens of thousands of dollars for orphanages which have no existence and for the maintenance of mission work which is nothing more than the provision of subsistence for the solicitors and their families. I enclose a copy of a letter written by Mr. Wigram, an Anglican missionary in Eastern Turkey, a member of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrians, addressed to the American Consul at Van, which will give you some account of this movement and the character of the men who are carrying it on. Many of these men are only inoffensive Oriental villagers, who do not know how fraudulent their enterprise appears to our moral sense. They have always been accustomed to live on charity, as far as they could, and they see no harm in making representations as to the objects for which they are soliciting money which have no basis in fact. There is not an orphanage in all the region from which these men come. Occasionally some of them will gather a few children together, have a photograph made of them, and may even have a little school conducted for a few weeks as a ground for fresh appeal. Many of the men, however, are thorough-going rogues, who knew very well what they are doing and who in many cases have forged the testimonials which they carry.

Recently a group of them were arrested in the South and more than 200 testimonials taken away from them. It is marvelous to me that they can get such testimonials, from governors, college presidents, consuls and others, and one who was an absolutely untrustworthy man had endorsements from the leading authorities of our Church who knew nothing whatever about him, but who, I suppose, gave him the testimonials on the basis of others which he had already secured.

As I have said, solicitors like these of whom you write have succeeded in gathering tens of thousands of dollars. One man went back a few years ago it is said with over \$20,000, and he was a particularly notorious rogue, for whom the police of British Columbia were seeking at the time of his departure. He raised his money under five different pseudonyms and on the score that he was supporting orphanages, not one of which had any existence. He returned to Urumia, where he became Turkish Vice-Consul, and has been living in comfort ever since upon the result of his depredations here.

* * * * *

I cannot answer all your definite inquiries, but I can say that the lot of many of the mountain Nestorians, as we call them, has not been a happy one, because of oppression from the Turks and the Kurds, and now and then there have been occasions when relief for some village subjected to special suffering has been abundantly justified, but no contributions are justified on the plea that they are for orphanages, of which none exist in this region, or for the support of schools, to which there is not the least probability that the solicitors will ever apply them.

Ver. faithfully yours,
(Signed) R. ROBERT E. SPEER.

C O P Y

Van, Turkey, January 22nd, 1912.

My dear Dr. Barton,

Our last post brought me your favor of Dec. 18th, as also a letter from Mr. J. F. Piper, concerning some of those Jilu beggars, who, it seems, have turned up in your vicinity, and I hasten to reply, and probably one letter to yourself will suffice, and you will be so kind as to communicate the same to Mr. Piper, and beg him to accept this as a reply to his letter also. Fortunately I have the ammunition all prepared for combatting these fellows, and I am very keen about doing so. Indeed, I am quite sure that I sent you documents on the subject a few years ago, but I only a few weeks since made new copies of them to send to Edinburgh, where some of the same crowd are operating, and so I can send you copies now, even though there is not much time before the post goes. I heard last spring that nearly a hundred of these rascals had set out from their mountain abodes, to spread themselves over the wide world, seeking whom they may devour. Of course it is impossible to identify each individual of such an army, probably even Mr. McDowell, whose work is right among them, might not be able to do this, but Dr. Wigren's letter certainly ought to be sufficient to nail any one of them. It explains where "Matha" is and what it means, and I may add that it would take three or four days to reach that point from Van, which defines the phrase "near Van" in the statement of the fellows. I feel so indignant that such continued rascality should go on among the nations of the earth, for no nation worth exploiting ~~is~~ is immune, that I want to use every means in my power to head them off. As Dr. Wigren says, it does seem strange that people could be so gullible as to give to such unauthorized scoundrels. If they showed any papers from Mar Shimon, they were forged, of that I am confident, but I know that they do get his seal in various ways and use it thus fraudulently. And then in various ways, they get different people to give them some kind of a certificate. I have had them come to me for entertainment, and help to pay traveling expenses, and the same day they would present drafts for hundreds of liras to be cashed in the city. In 1909 I sent copies of these papers to several parties, to your rooms and those of the Pres. Board, and to several papers, and hoped that they might be headed off, but they are constantly turning up, and it would seem that a number of you good people need to be on the lookout, and whenever any one of them appears in any community spot him at once. If the money they collect and use exclusively for their own personal support could be used for the Lord's work, what a bogus it would be. I trust that you will fully understand that it is not necessary to identify each of the crowd individually, anybody who comes from that region should be suppressed in some way. Dr. Wigren's assertion that there are no orphanages in that region should be sufficient to show that they are frauds. Of course there are churches, but even they do not profit in any direct way by what is thus given to these men.

Yours most sincerely,

(Signed) G. C. Reynolds.

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Van, Turkey, January 22nd, 1912.

My dear Dr. Barton,

Our last post brought me your favor of Dec. 18th, as also a letter from Mr. J. F. Piper, concerning some of those Jilu beggars, who, it seems, have turned up in your vicinity, and I hasten to reply, and probably one letter to yourself will suffice, and you will be so kind as to communicate the same to Mr. Piper, and beg him to accept this as a reply to his letter also. Fortunately I have the ammunition all prepared for combatting these fellows, and I am very keen about doing so. Indeed, I am quite sure that I sent you documents on the subject a few years ago, but I only a few weeks since made new copies of them to send to Edinburg, where some of the same crowd are operating, and so I can send you copies now, even tho there is not much time before the post goes. I heard last spring that nearly a hundred of these rascals had set out from their mountain abodes, to spread themselves over the wide world, seeking whom they may devour. Of course it is impossible to identify each individual of such an army, probably even Mr. McDowell, whose work is right among them, might not be able to do this, but Dr. Wigram's letter certainly ought to be sufficient to nail any one of them. It explains where "Matha" is and what it means, and I may add that it would take three or four days to reach that point from Van, which defines the phrase "near Van" in the statement of the fellows. I feel so indignant that such continued rascality should go on among the nations of the earth, for no nation worth exploiting ~~it~~ is immune, that I want to use every means in my power to head them off. As Dr. Wigram says, it does seem strange that people could be so gullible as to give to such unauthorized scoundrels. If they showed any papers from Mar Shimon, they were forged, of that I am confident, but I know that they do get his seal in various ways and use it thus fraudulently. And then, in various ways, they get different people to give them some kind of a certificate. I have had them come to me for entertainment, and help to pay traveling expenses, and the same day they would present drafts for hundreds of liras to be cashed in the city. In 1909 I sent copies of these papers to several parties, to your rooms and those of the Pres. Board, and to several papers, and hoped that they might be headed off, but they are constantly turning up, and it would seem that a number of you good people need to be on the lookout, and whenever any one of them appears in any community spot him at once. If the money they collect and use exclusively for their own personal support could be used for the Lord's work, what a boon it would be. I trust that you will fully understand that it is not necessary to identify each of the crowd individually, anybody who comes from that region should be suppressed in some way. Dr. Wigram's assertion that there are no orphanages in that region should be sufficient to show that they are frauds. Of course there are churches, but even they do not profit in any direct way by what is thus given to these men.

Yours most sincerely,

(Signed) G. C. Reynolds.

COPY.

March 28th, 1911.

The Rev. Fred B. Stone, D.D.,

210 Peoria Avenue,

Dixon, Ill.

Dear Dr. Stone,

As the American Missions among the Nestorians are under the care of our Church, Dr. Benton has sent me your letter addressed to the Methodist Missionary Secretaries, with the request that I reply.

I am sorry that you are having trouble with these solicitors. Our difficulties with them are endless. They are operating all over this country, and when we run them down in any one community they disappear and turn up in another, often under changed names. Some of them are mere beggars, who have the Oriental idea that if they can get money to live on without working, that is entirely legitimate, and that those who give it to them make merit for themselves in Heaven. Others of them are simply frauds, oftentimes with forged credentials making untrue representations. It is amazing that the American public is so willing to be imposed upon by them. Some of them have gone back with thousands of dollars, and one man was charged by the Vancouver police with nearly \$30,000 which he had collected under half a dozen different names for the support of orphanages which had absolutely no existence.

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The only thing to do is to refuse to give these money any money and to repudiate the missionary intentions which they put forth. Not only are these groundless, but they bring contempt upon honest Christian men from these lands who come over here to earn their way honorably. Not a cent should be given to these people, either for Missions or for charity. They should be obliged to work for their living and for all that they want to send back to their families.

Very faithfully yours,
(Signed) Robert E. Speer.

Dictated March 27th.

July 20th, 1914.

STATEMENT REGARDING PERSIAN SOLICITORS.

Scarcely a week goes by that inquiries are not made of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions with regard to natives of Persia or Eastern Turkey who are soliciting contributions for the support of alleged orphanages, schools or churches in their home communities. Hundreds of these solicitors have gone out into all parts of the world, and there are communities in Eastern Turkey which are entirely supported by the funds which are sent home. As a matter of fact, there are no orphanages, schools or other institutions justifying these solicitations. Many of the testimonials carried by these men are forged, others are of no value because their writers have no knowledge of the men or of the conditions in the communities from which they come. None of these solicitors have or can obtain letters of endorsement from any of the American or British missionaries at work in the regions from which they come, nor from the American or British Consuls resident in this territory.

The accompanying report regarding this whole ~~discredit~~ discreditable enterprise was written by a Church of England missionary to the American Consul in Van, Turkey.

No contributions should be given to these solicitors. The solicitors themselves should be turned over to the United-States Immigration authorities who will, if possible, arrange for their deportation.

Robert E. Speer,

Secretary.

C O P Y

The English Mission, Van, Turkey.
Oct. 27, 1909.

Milo Jewett, Esq.,
The American Consul, Trebizond.

Dear Sir:

Dr. Reynolds has handed me the letter which you wrote to him on Oct. 13th, 1909, asking for information concerning "Mar Sergius," Bishop of the Chaldeans of Martha, Jello, Kurdistan" and "Deacon Simon Daniels" said to have been authorized by the said Mar Sergius to collect subscriptions for the Church in question.

I. Mar Sergius, (The title is used indifferently for the Bishop or Saint and literally means "Lord"), is undoubtedly a bishop of the church called "Assyrian", "Nestorian", "Chaldean", whose members are found for the most part in the district known as Kurdistan. Locally, the last of the three names is confined to those Christians of the "Niolet" in question, who are in communion with Roman Catholics, but Mar Sergius is not one of that branch, but of the older independent church. He resides at a place properly called "Hata Mar Zeia" (village of St. Zeia,) and colloquially "Hata", in the Mt. district of Kilu, Makkiari. The nearest center of government is Julamerk, distant one day's journey, but there is little law or order of any kind in the district. The Bishop is about 23 years of age.

II. The letters. This bishop does often give letters, commending the bearer to the charitable, and giving him more or less authority to collect "for the church", in the countries to which he goes. The bearers represent themselves as collecting for church-building, schools or orphanages, etc. In no case have I ever known any of the money given to be spent on anything but the benefit of the collector himself, nor could the Patriarch of the church (who is known as Mar Shimun, and resides at Julamerk) tell of such a case. All churches in Jila are ancient; there are no orphanages, and such schools as exist are the property of foreign missions. The men who go out thus collect simply for themselves, tho the bishop in question may so far forget himself as to accept a small share of the plunder. The Patriarch has made efforts to stop this traffic, both because of the scandal, and because he knows that the money thus given would suffice to supply all the schools, etc. which his church needs, if it were spent for the purpose for which it was given. He has sent letters to the government of India, authorizing the prosecution of any who collect in his name, and he would no doubt do the same for the American Government if requested. He has not, however, been able to control his colleagues.

There are, of course, excuses for those who practice this traffic. 1st. The utter poverty in which the people and the bishop dwell, which makes them willing to adopt any means of earning money. 2nd. The fact that for generations, neither property nor life has had any sanctity in the country, and these men only collect contributions with a letter instead of with a gun. There is no very clear distinction between robbery and swindling, and in this country robbery is and always has been fair play. 3rd. The folly of those, in every country, who have apparently more charity than brains. A man in utter poverty knows that by going to America and "pitching a yarn" which he would not expect to be taken seriously in his own land, he can collect £ 3,000, which is a fortune here, and live well mean time. It will be seen that the temptation to take advantage of the criminal folly of those who trust these orientals as they would never dream of trusting their own countrymen is very great. If the people in America or elsewhere wish to help the individuals who come to them, there is no more to be said, for their personal need is often real enough. If however they wish, as is usually the case, to help the church, then let them give their contributions " earmarked " for whatever purpose they wish, to some one of the missions at work in the land, and they will have some security that the money will be expended for the purpose for which it is given. If the collector objects to this course, he thereby confesses himself a fraud. These missions are 1st. American. The Presbyterian Mission at Urmi, Persia, and the Congregational Mission at Van, Turkey. 2nd, English. The English Church Mission (Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission) at Urmi and Van. 3rd. French. The Lazarist Fathers at Urmi, and the Dominicans at Van. 4th, Russian. The "Orthodox" Church Mission at Urmi. One or the other of these will suit most religious idiosyncrasies.

I doubt if prosecution of the collectors, frauds as they usually are, would be of any use, for two reasons. A. The letters which they show are usually ~~genuine~~ genuine, but used with fraudulent intent. B. Imprisonment is no deterrent to these men, seeing that the prisons of any civilized land give board and lodging far superior to any they can get at home, and conviction is no disgrace in a land where it usually affords a presumption of innocence, and only proves that the defendant did not bribe! Confiscation of the letters and money, if possible, and deportation of the bearers as "Undesirable aliens" is preferable, if possible by American as it is by English law. What is needed for the abating of a custom which is at once a scandal and a nuisance is that the charitable should be more careful in their giving. While their carelessness makes a low form of swindling easy and profitable, poor men will swindle. I do not defend Mr Sergius nor his collectors, but I do not think the guilt all on their side.

I inclose a translation of the letter you sent to Dr. Reynolds; I do not know the men, nor do I know the "Stephen George, Fake-priest," whose photograph sent by the Canadian government, has also been forwarded

from Constantinople. He appears to it dressed as a European, shaved and washed, while in his own country it is not likely he would be seen in any one of these conditions, and hence is difficult to recognize. No doubt all these collectors are of the type described above.

A word upon my personal position. I am one of a small band of English clergy, sent by the Archbishop of Canterbury, England, to work under the Patriarch of the "Assyrian", "Nestorian" or "Chaldean" Church for the education of their clergy. I am well acquainted with all the Bishops of the church and believe that most of them are disgusted with the scandal and desirous to abate it. It must be remembered, however, that for some generations the lesson has been well rubbed into the oriental, that Franks are made of money, and are "fair game". Steps are being taken to put a stop to this traffic, in India, and I hope the same will be done in America.

I remain, Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) W. A. Wigram,
Head of the Mission of the
Archbishop of Canterbury.

TRANSLATION OF A SYRIAC LETTER. FORWARDED FROM AMERICA

Shamasha (I. L. Deacon) Shlimun, son of Babana, village of Jilu, Turkey, and Sh. Nimrud, son of Tawir, and Sh. Simeon, son of Daniel, say this: Sh. Shlimun is now at the house of the "Quasia" (priest) of Kangergish, but says to us "There are now six quasias come to my house with a letter from the bishop, now be it known to you, Mar Sergius, that this quasia is writing to you to see whether you sent us. Two lines in the English language for these two deacons and for me and for him, please send them quickly without fail.

Explanation of the above. Sh. Shlimun and Co. as I judge, came to the house of the "quasia" or clergyman of the place which they call Kangergis. The "Quasia" in question is presumably, the Rev. R. V. Stevens, and Kangergish the Syrian version of the name of his township. Mr. Stevens said to them "You are the sixth lot of fellows who have come to us to beg in this fashion; I shall write to your bishop and ask whether you are genuine or not. Shlimun (Solomon) then writes himself to the bishop, asking that two lines in the English language may be sent to him at once to prove that he has really been sent out with the episcopal authorization.

C O P Y

Van, Turkey in Asia, Oct. 7, 1909.

Dear Friend,

Three times during the last few months letters have come to me making inquiries regarding Nestorian swindlers, who are operating in the U.S. and Canada. Personally I know a good deal about this class of people and am very desirous to do what I may to put a stop to their depredations, but as my work is for the Armenians and not for the Nestorians, I am not in the way to get at the exact facts needed to nail them. I have accordingly asked the Rev. W. A. Wigram, D.D. the head of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission, if he would make out a statement from facts with which he is personally familiar, which might be sent out as an answer to the inquiries which have come thru Consul Jewett, from the U.S. Government, and through Mr. W. A. Peet, from the Canadian Government. Dr Wigram has kindly prepared a statement, which seems to me and my associates of the Van station eminently correct and enlightening, and it seems to us desirable that it should receive a wider circulation than might come from its being sent merely to the official inquiries. I venture therefore to send a copy to yourself and a few other representative individuals in the U.S. asking that if you deem it wise and desirable, you take measures to get the statement published, in whole or in part, by religious or secular journals, in such a way as to give general circulation to the facts, and make it inexcusable for anyone to be taken in by these swindlers. (Then follows a list of those to whom copies were sent).

I feel as if it were due to the Christian public to make an effort to put a stop to this traffic.

I remain,

Yours most sincerely,

(Missionary of
(Signed) C.C. Reynolds. (A.B.C.F.M. in Van)

Dec. 22nd, 1911.

Mr. G. F. Piper, Esq.,
131 Essex St., Salem, Mass.

Dear Sir:-

My associate, Dr. Brown, has referred to me your letter of Dec. 15th, as I happen to be more familiar with the matter of which you write. We have weekly inquiries such as yours regarding these Nestorian solicitors. Some years ago it was discovered that Christian people in Russia and Germany and England and the United States were very charitable with their gifts, and since then literally hundreds of these men, some of whom are ecclesiastics, others of whom are men of other callings, have poured out over these lands, collecting tens of thousands of dollars for orphanages which have no existence and for the maintenance of mission work which is nothing more than the provision of subsistence for the solicitors and their families. I enclose a copy of a letter written by Mr. Wigram, an Anglican missionary in Eastern Turkey, a member of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrians, addressed to the American Consul at Van, which will give you some account of this movement and the character of the men who are carrying it on. Many of these men are only inoffensive Oriental villagers, who do not know how fraudulent their enterprise appears to our moral sense. They have always been accustomed to live on charity, as far as they could, and they see no harm in making representations as to the objects for which they are soliciting money which have no basis in fact. There is not an orphanage in all the region from which these men come. Occasionally some of them will gather a few children together, have a photograph made of them, and may even have ~~at~~ a little school conducted for a few weeks as a ground for fresh appeal. Many of the men, however, are thorough-going rogues, who knew very well what they are doing and who in many cases have forged the testimonials which they carry.

Recently a group of them were arrested in the South and more than 200 testimonials taken away from them. It is marvelous to me that they can get such testimonials, from governors, college presidents, consuls and others, and one who was an absolutely untrustworthy man had endorsements from the leading authorities of our Church who knew nothing whatever about him, but who, I suppose, gave him the testimonials on the basis of others which he had already secured.

As I have said, solicitors like these of whom you write have succeeded in gathering tens of thousands of dollars. One man went back a few years ago it is said with over \$20,000, and he was a particularly notorious rogue, for whom the police of British Columbia were seeking at the time of his departure. He raised his money under five different pseudonyms and on the score that he was supporting orphanages, not one of which had any existence. He returned to Urumia, where he became Turkish Vice-Consul, and has been living in comfort ever since upon the result of his depredations here.

* * * * *

I cannot answer all your definite inquiries, but I can say that the lot of many of the mountain Nestorians, as we call them, has not been a happy one, because of oppression from the Turks and the Kurds, and now and then there have been occasions when relief for some village subjected to special suffering has been abundantly justified, but no contributions are justified on the plea that they are for orphanages, of which none exist in this region, or for the support of schools, to which there is not the least probability that the solicitors will ever apply them.

Ver. faithfully yours,
(Signed) E. ROBERT E. SPEER.

COPY.

March 28th, 1911.

The Rev. Fred B. Stone, D.D.,

210 Peoria Avenue,

Dixon, Ill.

Dear Dr. Stone,

As the American Missions among the Nestorians are under the care of our Church, Dr. Benton has sent me your letter addressed to the Methodist Missionary Secretaries, with the request that I reply.

I am sorry that you are having trouble with these solicitors. Our difficulties with them are endless. They are operating all over this country, and when we run them down in any one community they disappear and turn up in another, often under changed names. Some of them are mere beggars, who have the Oriental idea that if they can get money to live on without working, that is entirely legitimate, and that those who give it to them make merit for themselves in Heaven. Others of them are simply frauds, oftentimes with forged credentials making untrue representations. It is amazing that the American public is so willing to be imposed upon by them. Some of them have gone back with thousands of dollars, and one man was charged by the Vancouver police with nearly \$30,000 which he had collected under half a dozen different names for the support of orphanages which had absolutely no existence.

Many of these men profess to have authoritative endorsements from their Nestorian Bishops and the Nestorian Patriarch. Many of them have such letters, although recently the Patriarch gave the English Consul in Van a letter disavowing all responsibility for or endorsement of these solicitors.

There is one district in Eastern Turkey which is practically supported by the results of the beggars who go out from it all over the world.

The only thing to do is to refuse to give these money any money and to repudiate the missionary intentions which they put forth. Not only are these groundless, but they bring contempt upon honest Christian men from these lands who come over here to earn their way honorably. Not a cent should be given to these people, either for Missions or for charity. They should be obliged to work for their living and for all that they want to send back to their families.

Very faithfully yours,
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Dictated March 27th.

C O P Y

Urie, Tranton Rd, Bermondsey,

London, S.E.,

February 2nd, 1914.

Dear Sir:

A copy of your letter to Rev. E. Armstrong of Toronto has been sent to me. I note you make a very grave accusation of the Rev. Gabriel Alexander. Have you ever investigated this matter? Surely it was but just to do this for one of your own ministers educated in your colleges, who had borne the very highest character? His Committee in England have most fully traced this accusation which took 1-1/2 years to investigate. We find that the whole originated in a lover's jealousy. A young Nestorian named Ezat David Akers, furious at the marriage of Gabriel to the girl he loved, determined to ruin him. I have letters (which Ezat acknowledged to be his own) in which he says "I will go to MacArthur in New York, and I will then ruin Gabriel." "I will sacrifice my life with the life of Gabriel" and many threats. His own mother wrote "The young lady married Rev. G. Alexander, we know this to be the cause of Ezat's bad feelings."

The man Ezat came with Ellew to Canada as his partner and was cheated by him and thus exasperated. Rev. A. Brace, a friend of Ezat's who is still completely duped by him, wrote - "They Ellew and Gabriel operated here (British Col.) in the fall of 1905 and spring of 1906." I can prove Gabriel was never in Canada, and on Jan. 28, 1906 was ordained in New York, and came to my house in Feb. following.

Peter Ellew on finding Gabriel was accused of being his partner, went before a Com. of the American Missionaries in Russia and swore he had never been his partner, nor received a penny of his money; letter from Mr. Labaree enclosing statement. This old accusation had died down, but was revived by Dr. Isaac Adams (the chief of frauds) in 1910 because Gabriel had warned Mr. Garstin (merchant in London) that Adams was false. He induced

Mr. Garstin to write to Mr. Brace and to the missionaries in Urumia. They know only what they had heard from Mr. Brace, and did not vouch for its correctness. But as Mr. Garstin also said, Gabriel was collecting for an orphanage of 300 children, naturally they wrote he also was a fraud. I asked Mr. Garstin how he could say this as it was untrue, he was collecting for our Mission and all money in Treasurer's hands. He replied "I got it out of your book." (I had written an account of Nestorians) then I showed him in his haste he had put orphans instead of "children". The Schools where Gabriel taught opened by Rev. Yonan Shahbay were 300 children. This mistake caused the opposition of the Missys and inclined them to believe the story of partnership with Ellor. I think you will see poor Gabriel has been cruelly treated and his character ruined. In all he has maintained a calm and Christian demeanor, trusting in God to deliver him. In 1907 Rev. Dr. MacArthur visited Persia, I copy from his letter to Gabriel, "You have been doing good work in the Master's vineyard - May God bless you in your brave work."

Since 1909 he has been in our employ, and is working successfully among the Jews. I entreat you to do justice to this good and noble Christian man.

Yours sincerely

(Signed) (M. Barclay.

Can send more proofs if you wish.

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July 20th, 1914.

STATEMENT REGARDING PERSIAN SOLICITORS.

Scarcely a week goes by that inquiries are not made of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions with regard to natives of Persia or Eastern Turkey who are soliciting contributions for the support of alleged orphanages, schools or churches in their home communities. Hundreds of these solicitors have gone out into all parts of the world, and there are communities in Eastern Turkey which are entirely supported by the funds which are sent home. As a matter of fact, there are no orphanages, schools or other institutions justifying these solicitations. Many of the testimonials carried by these men are forged, others are of no value because their writers have no knowledge of the men or of the conditions in the communities from which they come. None of these solicitors have or can obtain letters of endorsement from any of the American or British missionaries at work in the regions from which they come, nor from the American or British Consuls resident in this territory.

The accompanying report regarding this whole ~~disreputable~~ discreditable enterprise was written by a Church of England missionary to the American Consul in Van, Turkey.

No contributions should be given to these solicitors. The solicitors themselves should be turned over to the United States Immigration authorities who will, if possible, arrange for their deportation.

Robert E. Speer,

Secretary.

C O P Y

The English Mission, Van, Turkey.
Oct. 27, 1909.

Milo Jewett, Esq.,
The American Consul, Trebizond.

Dear Sir:

Dr. Reynolds has handed me the letter which you wrote to him on Oct. 15th, 1909, asking for information concerning "Mar Sergius," Bishop of the Chaldeans of Martha, Jello, Kurdistan" and "Deacon Simcon Daniels" said to have been authorized by the said Mar Sergius to collect subscriptions for the Church in question.

I. Mar Sergius. (The title is used indifferently for the Bishop or Saint and literally means "Lord"), is undoubtedly a bishop of the church called "Assyrian", "Nestorian", "Chaldean", whose members are found for the most part in the district known as Kurdistan. Locally, the last of the three names is confined to those Christians of the "Violet" in question, who are in communion with Roman Catholics, but Mar Sergius is not one of that branch, but of the older independent church. He resides at a place properly called "Mata Mar Zeia" (village of St. Zeia,) and colloquially "Mata", in the Mt. district of Kilis, Hakkari. The nearest center of government is Julamerk, distant one day's journey, but there is little law or order of any kind in the district. The Bishop is about 23 years of age.

II. The letters. This bishop does often give letters, commending the bearer to the charitable, and giving him more or less authority to collect "for the church", in the countries to which he goes. The bearers represent themselves as collecting for church-building, schools or orphanages, etc. In no case have I ever known any of the money given to be spent on anything but the benefit of the collector himself, nor could the Patriarch of the church (who is known as Mar Shimun, and resides at Julamerk) tell of such a case. All churches in Jilz are ancient; there are no orphanages, and such schools as exist are the property of foreign missions. The men who go out thus collect simply for themselves, tho the bishop in question may so far forget himself as to accept a small share of the plunder. The Patriarch has made efforts to stop this traffic, both because of the scandal, and because he knows that the money thus given would suffice to supply all the schools, etc. which his church needs, if it were spent for the purpose for which it was given. He has sent letters to the government of India, authorizing the prosecution of any who collect in his name, and he would no doubt do the same for the American Government if requested. He has not, however, been able to control his colleagues.

There are, of course, excuses for those who practice this traffic. 1st. The utter poverty in which the people and the bishop dwell, which makes them willing to adopt any means of earning money. 2nd. The fact that for generations, neither property nor life has had any sanctity in the country, and these men only collect contributions with a letter instead of with a gun. There is no very clear distinction between robbery and swindling, and in this country robbery is and always has been fair play. 3rd. The folly of those, in every country, who have apparently more charity than brains. A man in utter poverty knows that by going to America and "pitching a yarn" which he would not expect to be taken seriously in his own land, he can collect £ 3,000, which is a fortune here, and live well mean time. It will be seen that the temptation to take advantage of the criminal folly of those who trust these orientals as they would never dream of trusting their own countrymen is very great. If the people in America or elsewhere wish to help the individuals who come to them, there is no more to be said, for their personal need is often real enough. If however they wish, as is usually the case, to help the church, then let them give their contributions " earmarked " for whatever purpose they wish, to some one of the missions at work in the land, and they will have some security that the money will be expended for the purpose for which it is given. If the collector objects to this course, he thereby confesses himself a fraud. These missions are 1st. American. The Presbyterian Mission at Urmí, Persia, and the Congregational Mission at Van, Turkey. 2nd, English. The English Church Mission (Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission) at Urmí and Van. 3rd. French. The Lazarist Fathers at Urmí, and the Dominicans at Van. 4th, Russian. The "Orthodox" Church Mission at Urmí. One or the other of these will suit most religious idiosyncrasies.

I doubt if prosecution of the collectors, frauds as they usually are, would be of any use, for two reasons. A. The letters which they show are usually ~~genuine~~ genuine, tho used with fraudulent intent. B. Imprisonment is no deterrent to these men, seeing that the prisons of any civilized land give board and lodging far superior to any they can get at home, and conviction is no disgrace in a land where it usually affords a presumption of innocence, and only proves that the defendant did not bribe! Confiscation of the letters and money, if possible, and deportation of the bearers as "Undesirable aliens" is preferable, if possible by American as it is by English law. What is needed for the abating of a custom which is at once a scandal and a nuisance is that the charitable should be more careful in their giving. While their carelessness makes a low form of swindling easy and profitable, poor men will swindle. I do not defend Mar Sergius nor his collectors, but I do not think the guilt all on their side.

I inclose a translation of the letter you sent to Dr. Reynolds; I do not know the men, nor do I know the "Stephen George, Fake-priest," whose photograph sent by the Canadian government, has also been forwarded

from Constantinople. He appears to it dressed as a European, shaved and washed, while in his own country it is not likely he would be seen in any one of these conditions, and hence is difficult to recognize. No doubt all these collectors are of the type described above.

A word upon my personal position. I am one of a small band of English clergy, sent by the Archbishop of Canterbury, England, to work under the Patriarch of the "Assyrian", "Nestorian" or "Chaldean" Church for the education of their clergy. I am well acquainted with all the Bishops of the church and believe that most of them are disgusted with the scandal and desirous to abate it. It must be remembered, however, that for some generations the lesson has been well rubbed into the oriental, that Franks are made of money, and are "fair game". Steps are being taken to put a stop to this traffic, in India, and I hope the same will be done in America.

I remain, Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) W. A. Wigram,
Head of the Mission of the
Archbishop of Canterbury.

TRANSLATION OF A SYRIAC LETTER, FORWARDED FROM AMERICA

Shamasha (D. L. Deacon) Shlimun, son of Babana, village of Jilu, Turkey, and Ch. Nizrud, son of Tawir, and Ch. Bineon, son of Daniel, say this: Sh. Shlimun is now at the house of the "Quasia (priest) of Kangergish, but says to us "There are now six quasias come to my house with a letter from the bishop, now be it known to you, Mar Sergius, that this quasia is writing to you to see whether you sent us. Two lines in the English language for these two deacons and for us and for him, please send them quickly without fail.

Explanation of the above. Ch. Shlimun and Co. as I judge, came to the house of the "quasia" or clergyman of the place which they call Kangergish. The "quasia" in question is presumably, the Rev. R. V. Stevens, and Kangergish the Syrian version of the name of his township. Mr. Stevens said to them "You are the sixth lot of fellows who have come to us to beg in this fashion; I shall write to your bishop and ask whether you are genuine or not. Shlimun (Soloman) then writes himself to the bishop, asking that two lines in the English language may be sent to him at once to prove that he has really been sent out with the episcopal authorization.

C O P Y

Van, Turkey in Asia, Oct. 7, 1909.

Dear Friend,

Three times during the last few months letters have come to me making inquiries regarding Nestorian swindlers, who are operating in the U.S. and Canada. Personally I know a good deal about this class of people and am very desirous to do what I may to put a stop to their depredations, but as my work is for the Armenians and not for the Nestorians, I am not in the way to get at the exact facts needed to nail them. I have accordingly asked the Rev. W. A. Wigram, D.D. the head of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission, if he would make out a statement from facts with which he is personally familiar, which might be sent out as an answer to the inquiries which have come thru Consul Jewett, from the U.S. Government, and through Mr. W. A. Peck, from the Canadian Government. Dr. Wigram has kindly prepared a statement, which seems to me and my associates of the Van station eminently correct and enlightening, and it seems to us desirable that it should receive a wider circulation than might come from its being sent merely to the official inquiries. I venture therefore to send a copy to yourself and a few other representative individuals in the U.S. asking that if you deem it wise and desirable, you take measures to get the statement published, in whole or in part, by religious or secular journals, in such a way as to give general circulation to the facts, and make it inexcusable for anyone to be taken in by these swindlers. (Then follows a list of those to whom copies were sent).

I feel as if it were due to the Christian public to make an effort to put a stop to this traffic.

I remain,

Yours most sincerely,

(Missionary of

(Signed) C.C. Reynolds. (A.B.C.F.M. in Van)

Dec. 22nd, 1911.

Mr. G. F. Piper, Esq.,
131 Essex St., Salem, Mass.

Dear Sir:-

My associate, Dr. Brown, has referred to me your letter of Dec. 13th, as I happen to be more familiar with the matter of which you write. We have weekly inquiries such as yours regarding these Nestorian solicitors. Some years ago it was discovered that Christian people in Russia and Germany and England and the United States were very charitable with their gifts, and since then literally hundreds of these men, some of whom are ecclesiastics, others of whom are men of other callings, have poured out over these lands, collecting tens of thousands of dollars for orphanages which have no existence and for the maintenance of mission work which is nothing more than the provision of subsistence for the solicitors and their families. I enclose a copy of a letter written by Mr. Wigram, an Anglican missionary in Eastern Turkey, a member of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrians, addressed to the American Consul at Van, which will give you some account of this movement and the character of the men who are carrying it on. Many of these men are only inoffensive Oriental villagers, who do not know how fraudulent their enterprise appears to our moral sense. They have always been accustomed to live on charity, as far as they could, and they see no harm in making representations as to the objects for which they are soliciting money which have no basis in fact. There is not an orphanage in all the region from which these men come. Occasionally some of them will gather a few children together, have a photograph made of them, and may even have ~~sk~~ a little school conducted for a few weeks as a ground for fresh appeal. Many of the men, however, are thorough-going rogues, who knew very well what they are doing and who in many cases have forged the testimonials which they carry.

Recently a group of them were arrested in the South and more than 200 testimonials taken away from them. It is marvelous to me that they can get such testimonials, from governors, college presidents, consuls and others, and one who was an absolutely untrustworthy man had endorsements from the leading authorities of our Church who knew nothing whatever about him, but who, I suppose, gave him the testimonials on the basis of others which he had already secured.

As I have said, solicitors like these of whom you write have succeeded in gathering tens of thousands of dollars. One man went back a few years ago it is said with over \$20,000, and he was a particularly notorious rogue, for whom the police of British Columbia were seeking at the time of his departure. He raised his money under five different pseudonyms and on the score that he was supporting orphanages, not one of which had any existence. He returned to Urumia, where he became Turkish Vice-Consul, and has been living in comfort ever since upon the result of his depredations here.

* * * * *

I cannot answer all your definite inquiries, but I can say that the lot of many of the mountain Nestorians, as we call them, has not been a happy one, because of oppression from the Turks and the Kurds, and now and then there have been occasions when relief for some village subjected to special suffering has been abundantly justified, but no contributions are justified on the plea that they are for orphanages, of which none exist in this region, or for the support of schools, to which there is not the least probability that the solicitors will ever apply them.

Ver. faithfully yours,
(Signed) E. ROBERT E. SPEER.

James H. Nicol

SYRIA MISSION

OFFICE OF
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
and
SECRETARY

of
The Board of Foreign Missions
of the
Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

BEIRUT March 24, 1936.

M

Ans.

Dr. Robert Speer
156 5th Avenue
New York City.

Dear Dr. Speer,

I wish to acknowledge your letter of March 6th with regard to the Assyrian-Nestorian situation. I am sending out tracers to several people who may be connected with the various phases of this matter, and as soon as I get any information I shall send it on to you. It certainly is wonderful the way these various small missionary societies put themselves in the way of working in these emergencies and will unerringly send collectors to America through whom they will be furnished with the sinews of war. There are some very devoted people among these various groups, but I do wish that they would make more earnest attempt to get their money from the people whom they represent.

We have been following with great sympathy the news about the floods. Nowadays we know about such things just as they are occurring. That is one of the blessings that we have through the radio. One morning this week *(7:00 P.M.)* I turned to WGY and a voice said, "This is Minneapolis, Minnesota, and we are broadcasting some selections by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra playing in the Cyrus Northrop auditorium on the campus of the University of Minneapolis." You can imagine what a thrill that gives us as we listen to an orchestra playing a few squares from Mrs. Nicol's home. This radio is still to me the great miracle of the age.

With kindest regards to all,

Very truly yours,

James H. Nicol
James H. Nicol
Secretary.

JHN.NA

OFFICE OF
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
and
SECRETARY

SYRIA MISSION

of
The Board of Foreign Missions
of the
Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

IM

BEIRUT April 7, 1936.

R. E. S.
APR 8 1936
Ans

Dr. Robert E. Speer
156 5th Ave.
New York City.

Dear Dr. Speer,

I believe there is still one more matter concerning which you have enquired recently, and that is the question of the Assyrians who are being moved into Syria from Iraq, and whether the agent of the Action Chretienne en Orient is probably reliable. I have taken the matter up with a French professor at the University, whose father was for a time the president of the Protestant missionary work carried on from Paris, and he writes that this society is in good standing, and that Mr. Berron, the director, is very highly thought of by his father, and of course the Monod family has been for years one of the best known Protestant families in France.

Therefore, as far as the reliability of the organization is concerned you need have no qualms. On the other hand I had a talk with Dr. Hudson, and he says that the whole matter of the present situation of the Assyrians in Eastern Syria is very uncertain. He himself does not know how many have been brought over, and when our missionaries attempted to visit the district, they were forbidden to do so by the French authorities. To me it does not seem quite the best plan for a rather small French missionary society to take the major responsibility of a thing like this, and immediately proceed to America to raise the funds with which to do the work while at the same time Americans in Syria are forbidden access to the district. If an appeal of any size is made to American Christians to help with this, it would seem that they would wish to have some American representation at the spending end also, that however is not any criticism of the reliable character of this particular agency.

Again you may wish to enquire as to the terms upon which this particular collector is working in America. You may recall that some agents representing another relief committee for the Assyrians centered in Zahleh, had a man in America who was working on a 20% commission, that is, he took one fifth for himself from all that he collected. As I say it might be, therefore, wise to find out the terms under which this man operates.

As far as the Action Chretienne en Orient is concerned, I believe that they have had one missionary in Aleppo, doing work mostly among the Armenian refugees.

Very sincerely yours,

James H. Nicol
James H. Nicol
Secretary.

JHN.NA

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OFFICE CENTRAL D'ENTR'AIDE DES ÉGLISES
EUROPÄISCHE ZENTRALSTELLE FÜR KIRCHLICHE HILFSAKTIONEN
EUROPEAN CENTRAL OFFICE FOR INTER-CHURCH AID
IN VERBINDUNG MIT DEM FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AMERICA

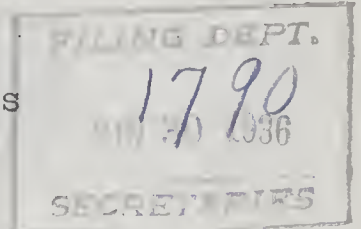
BUREAU DES EXECUTIVKOMITEES :

Präsident: Prof. E. Choisy, D. D. Genève
Vizepräsident: D. Alfred Jørgensen, Kopenhagen
Generalsekretär: Prof. D. Adolf Keller, D. D. Genève

GENÈVE, le June 10th, 1936
1, Rue des Photographes (Case 22, Eaux-Vives)
Tél. 54.350

Rev. Dr. Henry S. Leiper, New York
Rev. Dr. Charles Macfarland, New York
Rev. Dr. Cochran, Paris
Bischof D. Heckel, Berlin
Dr. A. G. Sleep, London { Evang.
Mr. Harry Jeffs, London { Continental Society
Principal P. Gibson, Cambridge
Dr. Macdonald Webster, Edinburgh
Rev. W. H. Hamilton, M. A. Gen. Secr. of the
General Presbyterian Alliance, Edinburgh
Rev. W. T. Elmslie, London
Prof. D. Eb. Vischer, Basel
Bishop Loimoranta, Helsingfors
M. le pasteur Boegner, Président de la Fédération
Protestante de France, Paris
Prof. Dr. F. Böhl, Leiden
Prof. Dr. J. A. Cramer, Bilthoven (Holland)
Pastor L. Koren, Oslo
Bischof D. Bursche, Präsident des Rates der
polnischen Kirchen, Warschau
Generalsekretör K. G. Fellenius, Stockholm
Propst Dr. Lars Wollmer, Lund
Bischof Dr. Nuelsen, Zurich
Senior Soucek, Präs. des Kirchenbundes, Prag
Colonel M. Sauter, Secr. of the Internat. Prot.
Loan Association, Genève
Amerik. Sekretärin: Miss Froendt, New York

Rev. Dr. Rob. E. Speer
The Board of Foreign Missions
156 Fifth Avenue
New York



Bank: Schweiz, Kreditanstalt Zürich
Postscheck: VIII 9733, Zürich
I. 5586. Genf

Telegramm- und Kabeladresse:
«Kirchenbund, Genf»

My dear Dr. Speer,

Thank you for your letter of May 28th. I am a bit anxious about the Ukrainian budget which is not yet covered for the current year. We got contributions especially from Switzerland, Holland, Ireland, America, Canada, Australia, but not enough for covering the budget, and I am afraid lest foreign contributions are used towards other purposes than for covering the first need of the budget. I am exceedingly glad to hear that the grant of \$7,000 for work in Europe is unreduced. Other Reformed and Presbyterian Churches should, of course, also feel it so that not everything would go to the Ukrainian movement. Our brethren in Transylvania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Italy are not in a minor need of help.

This money is well used and serves not only for material help but for maintaining that spiritual fellowship between America and Europe which is such a great asset in the present religious situation of the world. We cannot stress this too much.

I would suggest that from this sum what is lacking in the Ukrainian budget should be covered and the rest should go towards reformed parishes and students in Transylvania, Yugoslavia, the Reformed Church in Austria and towards our leadership programme for poor students.

Mr. Kusiw is working hard in the Ukraine, but he must be closely watched lest he starts all kind of things for which there are no means available. We do not admit to be responsible for the budget if not all collections made go towards covering this first need.

A part of the contributions should also be earmarked for the Administration of the European Central Bureau. We are constantly understaffed and overburdened, and it is extremely difficult to maintain the regular budget for the administration.

I am afraid lest the catastrophe of the League of Nations will affect the new plan for the Assyrians in a very unfortunate way. I had spoken with the Archbishop of Canterbury about it, who was launching an appeal in favour of the campaign of the League of Nations for settling the Assyrians. The League sent me two officers to ask whether the Churches could not help the League in their drive. I answered that it would not be easy for the Churches to participate in such a drive and that the only thing which could be contemplated was a joint effort of the Churches to give the Assyrians a few Churches or chapels in the region of the Ghab, but that at present we are very much concerned with other urgent drives. But now the whole plan is again threatened as the League is going through its most serious crisis.

Yours very sincerely

Abel Heller

C O P Y

R. E. Speer

June 4, 1936.

Rev. James H. Nicol, Sec.
American Mission
Beirut, Lebanon.

JUN 30 1936

Dear Mr. Nicol,

I spoke of writing you again about the Assyrian question. I feel that I have answered most of the questions that are asked in the Board Letter 190, pgs. 8 ffl. But to be sure that I answer with direct reference to the form, I am writing again. Of course, I am writing after one visit to them, i.e., the Assyrians, but I do believe what I say represents "snap judgments", inasmuch as I have been hearing about them for several years.

I think that the authoritative answers to many of the questions should be got from the officials here in Syria, Beirut or Hasceecha. The French have a Commandant de Pres or du Ples detailed for this work and then there is the Swiss member of the Committee for Settlement of these people called Burnier. These men seem to go back and forth between Beirut and Haseecha. When I last saw them, they were about to go to Beirut. But I shall give you my answer to the questions.

1. Pg. 8. How soon is the settlement of the Assyrians in the Ghab region to begin? They say that more people are coming over this fall (October). Just where they are to be settled seems to be a problem.

2. Will all of the Assyrians now in the Chebar (Khabour) district be removed to the Ghab region and if so how soon? Rumor has it that all of them would be moved. They themselves do not like being separated. It is said that the Turks do not like so many of them near the border. Personally, I do not believe they would be going on with the engineering projects that I spoke of in my letter if they were planning to move all of them to the Ghab.

3. This question can best be answered by the officials or by Cumberland.

4. There will be evangelicals among the people to come just as there are among the people here in the Khabour section. There are a considerable group of Protestants among the Khabour people, but they are not all in one camp. They said they were waiting until they all came to organize themselves more. They wanted to see where the Protestants were going to be put. The actual number was between 10 and 20 families in one camp.

5. Again, I should say that Cumberland would be able to give the best answer to this. Also number 6.

7. As for our missionary obligation. I would say that depends a great deal on our missionary obligation for those people when they were in Iraq. The Action Chretienne seem to be disposed to work among them. We have been trying to keep in touch with them in order that we might get them connected up with the Protestant Church. The Action Chretienne seem to be disposed to work with the Protestant Church also; so that no difficulty need be expected on that score. It all depends on what is finally done about settlement. I hope that they will all be settled in the Khabour basin for that is much preferable to the Ghab from the standpoint of health and they will be among a people more of their own kind in the Jezireh.

Of course there is the possibility that some of their Protestant workers who have been supported for years by our Iraq Mission will expect that this support will be continued, if not by the Iraq Mission by the Syria Mission. Such cases must be taken up as they come up. I shall write Cumberland now about them. I have written Willoughby and received no answer.

I do not believe in the future that there will be an opposition to the members of American Mission in Syria or any one connected with that Mission visiting the Assyrians. It happened once that the Delegee in Haseecha did not feel that he could grant me leave but I think that this was merely an unfortunate accident, not a studied policy.

In regard to the use of any especial relief funds for these people, I would emphatically say that it is not necessary now. They are very well taken care of, the ones that are here. Almost too much has been done for them. As I believe I said in my previous letter, it would be much more to the point if Christian people would become concerned about the refugees that have been coming down from Turkey for years, Arabic and Armenian speaking, who have had no grants to build houses and get started in work. The congregations of our own Protestant Church in Kamishlieh and Haseecha both need help badly on their church building programs so that they may have rooms for schools that they wish to start for their people. If the Board wish to use money for relief work, it would be much more to the point to assist these congregations for which we have more direct responsibility and for whom no one else is caring. It would be of positive aid to the Assyrians to have two strong Protestant Churches built up in their immediate vicinity. Help with buildings and help with schools would be to the point for the Protestant communities.

I trust you will speak strongly about the Zahleh project. There is no use of those people going on year after year with a school project when there are our own Mission schools to which they could go. It looks to me as a private project to get support for the man himself. But you are in closer touch with that than I am.

I hope this will help you in writing anything that you may want to write to the Board.

Sincerely yours,

Signed: Robert F. Ogden

509 5th Street South
St. Petersburg, Fla.

May 26 1936.

Dr. Robert E. Speer, Sec.
Presby. Bd. of Foreign Missions
156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

My dear Dr. Speer:

The copy of your letter to the Iran Mission No. 104, has been read with interest, especially that portion of it pertaining to the Assyrians, pages 12-13.

May I offer what slight information I have bearing on your questions?

Question 2: If I mistake not, the Assyrians in the Chebar district were originally of Bohtan, of the Kaimakumlik of Jezireh Inb Omar, on the Tigris. They were of the villages, Monsoria, Shakh, Hassana, Mar Yokhanan and Mar Akha. Their pastors were Kasha Yokhanan, Kasha Elea, Shamasha Sego, Kasha Mattai, Muallim Musa and Rabi Isaac. All of whom, except the first, were killed the opening year of the war by direct orders of the Turkish government. At that same time the people of these villages were put to the sword. It is the small remnant from those massacres which, I am sure, are designated as being in the Chebar district.

These people are strong Protestants, having their beginning in a brief evangelistic visit to Bohtan by Mr. Rhea, one of whose converts was bishop Mar Yosep of Shakh. Another convert was Hannoo of Monsoria, of fragrant memory and fruitful labors in the Lord often mentioned in missionary annals. The churches established in Bohtan above all others were godly people staunch in their faith and of high moral character. On the coming of the British forces to Mosul these remnants came under their care and were located near Zakho and Pesh Khaboor along with a larger number of Roman Catholics.

They did not mix well and our people made petition of the British authorities to be allowed to pitch their tents across the river - the Tigris - in French territory. It was pointed out to them that the new territory was unsafe but they insisted upon going, preferring to assume such risk rather than to live with the big crowd with its confusion and quarreling. I had been visiting them and was with them when they made choice of Chebar.

Our preacher, Kasha Israil, was a native of Bohtan and is now a pastor in Zakho. More than any one else he is competent to speak in behalf of this group.

Questions 3 and 5: The very thought^t of using compulsion in the resettlement of the Assyrians is abhorrent. It is enough to stigmatize it merely to mention the names of Kasha Keena, Kasha Zkuria and Shamasha Tawor. There are many good people of the Assyrians who have struck deep root in Mosul and Bagdad, are earning their own living and have proved themselves to be good citizens. It would be a crime to force them loose from their adopted homes and to transplant them to this new spot to begin all over again, and with so very much that will be uncongenial and even hostile to them.

Question 7: Undoubtedly we have missionary obligations to the group "on the Chebar" (the river Khaboor); and we should be actively faithful in the discharge of our duties.

On the other hand if there is some French society of the evangelical order qualified and will to^{ing} assume spiritual oversight

of these groups in French territory it might be wise and right to transfer our responsibilities to them.

I was intimately acquainted with Rabi Zadok; he was a member of the Mar Shimon family and of the better sort.

Without doubt the Roman Church will do every thing in its power to absorb these remnants of the Church of the East and will hinder and thwart the evangelical forces at every turn.

Captain Gracey was and is a warm personal friend of mine. He and my son Robert were associated during the war under the British in protecting the Armenians and Assyrians in northwest Persia and southern Russia. I am pleased to learn that he is still engaged in ministering to them. And glad too that such a fund is to be secured for maintenance of education and worship-350,000 francs.

I would heartily approve too of your using the small sum left over of the old relief fund.

I am sending you herewith, in this same general connection, a paper I wrote in the fall of 1933. I think I sent the paper to you at the time or the same in substance. But in reading it over I feel there is a possibility that you may be able to use it at this present time by a judicious distribution of the same in a personal way. e.g. Captain Gracey and certain others in England;

thus also to influential friends in America. May I ask of you that you give it a reading? In the writing of it I endeavored to avoid using language unduly offensive to interested persons and yet at the same time I did try to fix responsibility where it belonged-in political necessity and selfishness. The letter I sent to you was under date of August 26 1934. My thought in using these papers at this present time is just the possibility and hope that thereby some added interest may be aroused in behalf of these sorely harassed remnants of God's children, who must be very dear to our Master.

Instead of private circulation, would it be better to use it if possible through newspaper publicity -as the New York Times or Christian Science Monitor- or perhaps the Manchester Guardian?

I would like to tell you how it stirred me to read this portion of your letter to the Iran Mission. In the past you were always been so ready at whatever inconvenience to espouse the cause of the weak and needy and thus you are today. God grant you to be spared to the Church yet many years.

Most cordially and sincerely,

E. C. McDowell

OFFICE OF
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
and
SECRETARY

James H. Speer
D. E. Speer
APR - 6 1936

SYRIA MISSION

of
The Board of Foreign Missions
of the
Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

MS
BEIRUT April 21, 1936.

Dr. Robert E. Speer
156 5th Avenue
New York City.

Dear Dr. Speer,

I have some further information to pass on to you with reference to the Assyrian situation. I am sure we had every right to expect that the semi-romantic and tragic aspect of this whole matter would arouse the interest of the Christian world, and that is just what is happening in France, Great Britain and America. For instance, Mar Shimun made a personal plea to the British and Foreign Bible Society for Bibles and Testaments, and that Society made a very generous appropriation, and now they are in doubt as to the means available for distribution of the Bibles among the refugees who have actually come to Syria.

The numbers, by the way, are very uncertain, as I have a definite statement from our own representative in Kamishli near by, that 13,000 have already arrived, whereas the French political officer here in Beirut states that only 6,000 have actually come, that 15,000 more are on the way and will be settled by the end of May, with another 10,000 possibly coming in the future, making the highest estimate of the ultimate number 31,000.

To resume the subject of help for them, may I say that the Lord Mayor of London is also raising a very large fund; then the Archbishop Canterbury feels that he has a particular responsibility because of the fact that the Anglicans have had an interest in the Assyrians for a long time, as have indeed the Episcopalians from America. The Bishop in Jerusalem has, therefore, recently sent a representative to inquire into the situation. From the French standpoint it is evident that they would very much prefer that this whole matter of the settlement of the Assyrians and any help that they receive should be through themselves rather than through any other foreigners, and I am of the opinion that that is why this very small missionary society, the Action Chretienne en Orient, is being put forward as the collector of funds in America. Mr. Ogden, our missionary in Deir ez Zor was told that permission was not being given to visit the refugees, and that if he wished to go he would have to get permission from the High Commission.

You may see from the above the possible scramble that there may be to help the Assyrians, partly because of their need, partly because of the tragedy of their political plight, and partly because of the political considerations within the French Mandate.

Naturally it appears to us rather strange that if America is to be the source of any considerable amount of money, Americans out here should have no voice whatever in the distribution of the funds. Pasteur Berron of the Action Chretienne En Orient will be in Beirut in the near future, and I expect to have a talk with him on the whole question.

In the mean time I have received word from our representative in the "Jezireh", which by the way is the North-eastern district of Syria where these Assyrians are being located, which reflects his own experience in the matter. He would not like to be quoted, as all of these situations are very delicate at present, but I can give you the gist of what he says.

He had conversations with outstanding personalities from among the Assyrian refugees. There is no doubt that they are in great need, and these leaders say that a very small percentage of the amounts raised for them by the League of Nations, England and Iraq has reached them. Of course a statement like that must be taken with a grain of salt, because refugees in such a situation are very apt to make accusations of that sort, but on the other hand there is always a distressing amount of truth in such statements. There are evidently many phases of this that our representative cannot write, and he expresses a wish that he could talk it over with me face to face.

With regard to the Action Chretienne en Orient, he states that it is not now working, and has not worked among the Assyrians, although it may be planning to do so. The Assyrians with whom he talked had never heard of the organization. As for Sadook de Mar Shimun, he claims to know personally about him. Sadook was the director of an Assyrian school in Iraq, and was secretary to Mar Shimun. Some of the Assyrians think that in a way, not quite clear, he betrayed his master and the Assyrians, and was one among other causes for the difficulties of the people and their final immigration. Sadook later came to Syria with a passport from Iraq and wished to live among the Assyrian refugees. These refugees did not wish to have him remain with them, and requested the French government to send him away. This our representative was told, but he himself saw Sadook and his family being led to the Public Security office in Kamishli, and that office sent him to Beirut. Sadook is not therefore, and has not been one of the refugees in the Jezireh. These Assyrians with whom he spoke say that they do not want to have anything to do with Sadook. Of course it was natural that they should also tell our representative that if they were to have any help they would prefer to have it come through the American Mission, but I think that may also be discounted.

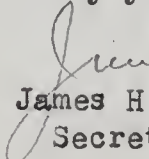
One other consideration that may be lost sight of is that there is a large number of Protestants among the refugees. One of these states that Sadook is not to be trusted with money, but will take a part of it for himself, and divert a part to the pockets of two or three others. Please do not understand that I am accepting all of these statements at their face value, but at any rate it is enough to show that the whole question is a rather complex one, and I should think that the Federal Council of churches should keep a very close watch on anything that is done in a very large way in America.

It does seem very artificial and in a measure unchristian that we are not able to take a matter of this kind naturally and all of us together work for the alleviation of suffering, but politics seem to enter into everything nowadays, and I am quite sure, as I said above, that the government would greatly prefer that any activities among the Assyrian refugees should be undertaken by French people under strict French control. We shall, however, be ready without prejudice, to help in any way that we can, and I hope that all of the friends in America will feel free to call on us for any service that we can render.

I shall keep you informed of any events that seem to be significant.

Kindest regards to all the friends.

Very truly yours,


James H. Nicol
Secretary.

JHN.NA

Dr. Adolf Keller

OFFICE CENTRAL D'ENTR'AIDE DES ÉGLISES
EUROPÄISCHE ZENTRALSTELLE FÜR KIRCHLICHE HILFSAKTIONEN
EUROPEAN CENTRAL OFFICE FOR INTER-CHURCH AID

IN VERBINDUNG MIT DEM FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AMERICA

BUREAU DES EXECUTIVKOMITEES :

Präsident : Prof. E. Chaisy, D. D. Genève
Vizepräsident : D. Alfred Jørgensen, Kopenhagen
Generalsekretär : Prof. D. Adolf Keller, D. D. Genève

GENÈVE, le July 28th, 1936

1, Rue des Photographes (Case 22, Eaux-Vives)
Tél. 54.350

Rev. Dr. Henry S. Leiper, New York
Rev. Dr. Charles Macfarland, New York
Rev. Dr. Cachran, Paris
Bischof D. Heckel, Berlin
Dr. A. G. Sleep, London { Evang.
Mr. Harry Jeffs, London { Continental Society
Principal P. Gibson, Cambridge
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General Presbyterian Alliance, Edinburgh
Rev. W. T. Elmslie, London
Prof. D. Eb. Vischer, Basel
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M. le pasteur Boegner, Président de la Fédéra-
lian Protestante de France, Paris
Prof. Dr. F. Böhl, Leiden
Prof. Dr. J. A. Cromer, Billhoven (Halland)
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polnischen Kirchen, Warschau
Generalsekretär K. G. Fellenius, Stockholm
Propst Dr. Lora Wallmer, Lund
Bischof Dr. Nuelsen, Zurich
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Colonel M. Sauter, Sec. of the Internat. Prot.
Loon Association, Genève
Amerik. Sekretörin : Miss Froendt, New York

Rev. Dr. Robert E. Speer
Board of Foreign Missions
156 Fifth Avenue
New York

R. E. Speer

AUG 7 1936

Ans.

My dear Dr. Speer,

I received your letter of June 27th, and would have written earlier if I had not to go to England for my Beckly Lectures.

The budget for the Ukrainian movement is not yet covered. We shall again have a conference at Prague of the interested Church representatives.

[It is simply disastrous that the plan of the League to settle the Assyrians on the Ghab has broken down. I was at Lambeth Palace last week and discussed the matter also with Captain Gracey. We are simply bewildered.

I think I told you that the League sent me a few months ago two officers to discuss how the Churches could help the League to finance the plan. They would have liked to lay the baby on our arms. I told them that there was no question for the Churches of participating in a general drive for the League. The only thing which could be contemplated would be a drive for giving the Assyrians a Church building or a school. And now this breakdown because the new *reus* government is withdrawing from Syria and the nationalist movement there is very strong. Captain Gracey spoke of the possibility to buy back from Turkey the old home land for the Assyrians, but we will have to wait a good deal of time before anything can be decided. There is so much pessimism here in Geneva.]

A new book of mine, the Beckly Lectures "Church and State on the European Continent" has just been published by the Epworth Press in London. It may be that an American edition is coming out.

I hope you have some holidays; for the moment I have none, but much work.

With kindest regards to Mrs. Speer,
Yours very sincerely

Adolf Keller

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5

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R. E. Speer

JUL 17 1936

July 16, 1936

Dr. Robert E. Speer
156 Fifth Avenue
New York City

Dear Dr. Speer:

Mr. Sweetser prepared some notes on our luncheon meeting, July 8th, copy of which I am enclosing for your files.

I hope that this group will find it convenient to meet again before Mr. Sweetser returns to Geneva.

Sincerely yours,

Barclay Acheson

Barclay Acheson
Executive Secretary

BA:S
Enclo.

THE ASSYRIAN PROJECT

A luncheon discussion of the most important people controlling the great American agencies interested in the Assyrians was arranged on July 8th through the courtesy of Mr. Barclay Acheson, Executive Secretary of the Near East Foundation, There were present:

Mr. Barclay Acheson, Executive Secretary, Near East Foundation
Mr. Cleveland E. Dodge, Treasurer of Near East Relief and
President of Near East Foundation
Dr. Robert E. Speer, of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign
Missions
Miss Froendt, in charge of all the philanthropic activities
of the Federal Council of Churches
Mr. Samuel Thorne, representing the Protestant Episcopal
Church
Mr. Arthur Sweetser of the League of Nations Secretariat

Mr. Sweetser explained that he was somewhat embarrassed, first, because in a meeting of persons very familiar with the Assyrian problem he could claim no direct knowledge whatsoever and, because an important letter which had been promised him by cable from Geneva regarding the most recent developments had not been received. Nevertheless, he gave a brief outline of the situation as shown in the League documents before him and particularly of the special interest which the League has shown in this matter as evidenced by its unique action in making an appreciable appropriation out of its own funds. The project had been more carefully worked out on the spot by men such as Mr. Lopez Olivan, whom Mr. Sweetser could guarantee to be of the highest integrity, and it had the support of the mandatory power which had made a considerable appropriation, of the British and Irak governments which had voted 250,000 pounds each, and of the League. Recently, it seemed from a cable message, that some new factor had developed where, of course, it would be necessary to wait for fuller information.

The ensuing discussion showed a very appreciable knowledge of the Assyrian problem in general, but less of the League project in particular. Dr. Speer read letters from Dr. Keller in Geneva and from others in the Near East. Miss Froendt spoke of an appeal which her organization had started some time ago but not formally launched. Mr. Thorne said that his committee had considered the matter in general but were not optimistic. Mr. Acheson gave impressions based on long residence on the spot.

A number of points of interest developed which are worth recording:

(1) Some disposition was shown that the Assyrians might have continued in Irak if they had been somewhat more conciliatory. They had in effect pressed their claims rather strongly, and had sometimes given the impression that they were counting on others to look after them.

(2) The Assyrian cause in this country has been seriously hurt both by dissension amongst the leaders and by some very definite misrepresentation. Mention was made, for instance, of a system closely approaching forged appeals.

(3) The League's present project was considered interesting but considerably more doubtful in case of an abandonment of the mandate as reported in the press, and an even greater extension of Arab control. The situation indeed would have been happier if the Ghab district had been nearer the coast line within reach of British destroyers.

(4) Various special difficulties would have to be most in this situation:

A. The present spirit of isolationism is damaging every international interest and making it necessary, for instance, for the churches to concentrate all their efforts on keeping merely their present activities alive.

B. The entry of government into relief on this side has led to the psychology of "letting the government do it." There would be a good many people, for instance, who could not be convinced that two great countries such as Britain and France, aided by the League of Nations, could not handle the relatively small matter of 20,000 or 30,000 Assyrians.

C. It would be difficult in this case to make an appeal of a direct national interest as would be the case, for instance, in an appeal to aid the Chinese.

D. It would be similarly difficult to make a gripping humanitarian appeal as in the case of the starving in India for the reason that the Assyrians are really better off now than they have been.

E. The idea of a special Sunday would not be easy, first, because there is already such a demand for special Sundays and, second, because one could be arranged only through agreement of all constituent members whose meetings have in effect been concluded for the year.

F. Finally, the sum involved would be a small one which would require just as much trouble to raise as a larger one.

Mr. Sweetser admitted all these difficulties. He pointed out, however, that there was another old side of the question which in his mind counterbalanced them all. Certainly a most romantic appeal could be made for saving the last remnant of the oldest Christian race which had wandered homeless and persecuted almost for centuries, and which now was offered a final solution to its problem, guaranteed not only by Great Britain, France and Irak but also by the community of nations through the League of Nations. The question was, to his mind, whether America would take her part in this or have to declare absence. The United States ought, in his judgment, to be a member of the League, and thus to pay its share of the League's contribution, i.e. some \$40,000. Failing that, was it conceivable that perhaps the richest nation in the world, with such a tremendously organized church movement and such wide emotional interests, would not be present in an effort to draft a final solution to this century old problem.

The others present admitted the force of this argument. They agreed to hold themselves in readiness to meet again if and when the anticipated information from Geneva justifies it. They were not optimistic of the outcome; nevertheless they felt that the exchange of views had been very valuable in bringing them in touch both with the League's view in the matter and with their own mutual information.

Copy of Letter from Mr. Ogden - Re Assyrians.

FILING DEPT.

15-11
JUN 30 1936

Deir ez Zor
May 28, 1936.

SECRETARIES

Dear Friends:

Several of you as well as others, I may not recall, have asked me about the Assyrian refugees at present settled in the Khabour basin in North Syria. The questions were of a varied nature and I was not able to answer them. I promised myself and some of you that if I were permitted to visit these people, I would write you a letter which might give you something of the present condition of these people. I shall be glad to try and answer any questions that you wish to raise which might not be taken care of in this letter.

On Sunday, the 17 of May, 1936, I was in Haseecha in the course of a trip thru the Jazireh. With me were Mr. F.L.White of the American Presbyterian Mission and Rev. Karim Koumy of the Syrian Protestant Church of Aleppo. We had planned on visiting the Assyrian villages in previous years but were held back by lack of official permission. This year, I was able to catch M. Burnier of the Committee concerned with the settlement of these people and he assured me that no permission was necessary. So the next day we started north and west to see these places.

These people estimated at from six to ten thousand are settled in nine villages or "camps" as they are called. There may be some difference as to the number of these camps according to the various sources. The camps vary in size and are situated along the Khabour about half way between Haseecha and Ras el Ain on the Turkish border. The houses are built of mud brick but very well made. The design is of the "bee-hive" type so common around Homs, Hama and Aleppo. But there is this difference that the "hive" is built upon a larger square base and the "hive" is broader making a more spacious building. In fact about three of the domes or "hives" are usually built on top of one square base. There are more windows than usual in the villages near Aleppo and the other cities. The houses are built according to plans with wide streets and in order.

Since we knew that we would not be able in the limited time that we had at our disposal to visit all of the camps or even to drive thru them, we drove thru the first two or three in order coming from Haseecha and then visited the 4th or 5th camp, which was the largest of the camps. This was called Tell Tamr and was the camp of Malak Jako. The camp was built around the base of an old artificial tell covering the site of some ancient village. We stopped there because we had an introduction to one of the clan leaders in the village who was called Rais Pooma, and who was a Protestant. After some inquiry, we met him and were invited into his house for coffee, while we asked questions about the camps. It seems that this camp was the central one and had the store house where the tractors and machinery was stored for all of the project.

It seems that each camp has its responsible leader or muktar and then the various tribes or clans have their own rais or head. This camp had two schools which we visited. One was in a church was rather large and was following the regular curriculum of their church schools. The second was a different sort of venture, with a curriculum more like the schools of Syria with French and English in addition to Arabic. Not many of them speak Arabic, we were told.

There seemed to be an air of uncertainty and waiting. We were told that there were to be some 2500 more brought over soon, at least before the fall. Just where they would be settled, it has not been decided. Naturally these people do not like to be divided. They seemed to think that when the remainder come over or at least this 2500, there will be a new division and some that are in the Khabour camps will go elsewhere and some of the new people will be put there. But there is a great deal of uncertainty about what is to be done.

These camps give the impression of being well taken care of. There are tractors, metal water wheels and motors and pumps that have been provided for them by the settlement Commission, we were told. They have started laying out elaborate irrigation schemes including resevoirs and ditches to irrigate large tracts of land. We saw quite a few small plots of ground under cultivation, irrigated by the water wheels, what we would call in America "truck farming".

There was the story of a scandal in the Haseecha govt. in which the gendarmes connived at Beduin thieving of the Assyrian flocks. Now the villages have their own armed guards and the gendarmes have been removed.

This care taken of the Assyrians has a tendency to make the rest of the population somewhat critical of them and their life. Most of the population were refugees themselves only they did not come enmasse nor by government order but at their own instigation. But the Assyrians are wanted in the neighborhood in the hope that they will increase trade and add to the number of the Christian population.

It does not seem that there is anything that the American Mission can do at present toward taking care of these people. Our church should plan to visit the camps where there are any considerable number of Protestants, especially if there are any sizable groups that understand Arabic. That could easily be done in the course of a visit to Ras el Ain, where there is a small Protestant group.

Sincerely yours,

Signed: R. F. Ogden.

Copy of Letter from Mr. Ogden - Re Assyrians.

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May 28, 1936.

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There was the story of a scandal in the Haseecha govt. in which the gendarmes connived at Beduin thieving of the Assyrian flocks. Now the villages have their own armed guards and the gendarmes have been removed.

This care taken of the Assyrians has a tendency to make the rest of the population somewhat critical of them and their life. Most of the population were refugees themselves only they did not come enmasse nor by government order but at their own instigation. But the Assyrians are wanted in the neighborhood in the hope that they will increase trade and add to the number of the Christian population.

It does not seem that there is anything that the American Mission can do at present toward taking care of these people. Our church should plan to visit the camps where there are any considerable number of Protestants, especially if there are any sizable groups that understand Arabic. That could easily be done in the course of a visit to Ras el Ain, where there is a small Protestant group.

Sincerely yours,

Signed: R. F. Ogden,